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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PALAZZO).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 29, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVEN M. PALAZZO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we witnessed thugs, tyrants, and dictators from Russia, Iran, and Cuba speak before the General Assembly at the United Nations; and with straight faces, each claimed to be defenders of peace, of international standards, of human rights, principles that Putin, Rouhani, and Castro have made a living out of ignoring and abusing to the detriment of the people who live under their oppressive rule.

President Obama had an opportunity to set the tone, to call for reforms at the badly mismanaged United Nations, to challenge the status quo and reestablish America's leadership and credibility. Instead, he used it as an opportunity to pay lip service to American ideals and values and to abdicate America's role as a world leader, a void that is now being filled by our adversaries like Russia, Iran, China, and Syria.

The Russians continue their aggressive actions in Ukraine and are now sending military hardware to the murderous Assad regime. Iran has had a record number of hangings since the so-called moderate leader, Rouhani, took office, and thousands of ethnic and religious minorities are imprisoned and sentenced to death.

The President has done everything in his power not to upset the Iranians because he doesn't want to ruin the chance for a nuclear deal, a deal which will cause a nuclear and conventional arms race in the region, and his words yesterday proved to be empty rhetoric when matched to his policies and actions in the past.

Not to be outdone, Raul Castro doubled down on his intransigence, further demonstrating that the Obama administration offered concessions to the regime, which have resulted in even greater oppression by that hated Cuban dictatorship. But per usual with the President, it was the "blame America first" narrative that he was trying to peddle with his misguided policies toward Cuba.

President Obama used this opportunity to undermine the United States Congress, and perhaps foreshadowing an eventual abstention on the U.N. vote on the Cuban embargo, he stated:

I'm confident that our Congress will inevitably lift an embargo that should not be in place anymore.

President Obama failed once again to put the onus on the Castro regime to

release all political prisoners, to hold free and fair elections, and to respect human rights in order for us to lift the embargo. The Cuban embargo language in the law is clear on all the conditions, Mr. Speaker, conditions that have to be met in order for it to be lifted, conditions that the Castro regime has no interest in abiding by.

President Obama should stop ignoring current law and stop loosening regulations on a regime that has done nothing to deserve this praise. The Castro regime is the one responsible for the human rights violations occurring in Cuba and the constant beatings against pro-democracy leaders. The U.S. embargo cannot be held responsible for that.

Does Castro say: "Oh, I had to beat the very peaceful group Ladies in White walking to church because the embargo says I must beat their heads in?" Does Castro say: "Oh, I cannot have any political party operating in Cuba other than the Communist Party because the embargo has me, obligates me, to only have this political party operating?" Does he say: "I cannot respect human rights in Cuba because that nasty U.S. embargo forces me to violate human rights?" Of course not. That is lunacy. That is a responsibility that only Castro can claim. The Castro regime instead has done nothing—nada—to unclench its iron fist.

Mr. Speaker, President Obama's remarks yesterday at the U.N. made him part of the problem with what is wrong at that broken institution; and, once again, it highlighted that his misplaced priorities and misguided foreign policies have not kept our country any safer.

That is why it is up to us in Congress to be proactive and to push for reforms at the United Nations. That is why this week I am reintroducing my U.N. Transparency Accountability and Reform Act. My bill would fundamentally change the way that we fund this failed

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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institution by shifting the funding mechanism from assessed to voluntary contributions in order to make the organization more effective and accountable to its objectives.

For example, the Human Rights Council does not deserve our assistance when countries like Cuba, China, Venezuela, some of the world's worst human rights violators, push a decidedly anti-American, anti-Israel agenda at the Council. We should not fund these bodies at the U.N. We should only fund the ones that we believe are working, the ones that are transparent, the ones who are accountable to the member states that donate their budgets.

Mr. Speaker, the Obama administration has had 7 years to implement reforms, and it has failed. It is time for Congress to take the lead, and I urge my colleagues to sign up to my bill this week.

LET STATES SET MARIJUANA POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, amidst all the turmoil on the world stage, I think many of us are still processing the visit from Pope Francis last week, his call for us to care for the planet, for our fellow man, for all of God's creatures.

In the background here on Capitol Hill, there is more than a little turmoil in terms of what is going to happen after the resignation of Speaker BOEHNER. There looks to be a little good news that we will avert a government shutdown, at least for a few months, as we continue to have the misdirected crusade to defund Planned Parenthood.

I have been focusing on the epidemic of deaths from prescription drug abuse and heroin overdoses. Mr. Speaker, it is something that is creating problems from Portland, Oregon, to Portland, Maine; yet, in the midst of that epidemic, there was a stark symbol of our dysfunction on something that most Americans now think should be legal.

There are over 200 million Americans that live in States where they can get access to medical marijuana. Four States and the District of Columbia have legalized adult use, and more States are going to be voting on it again this year; yet we have arrested over 7 million people over the last 10 years, costing billions of dollars.

It can turn lives upside down, particularly lives of young men of color, especially African Americans, who are arrested many times more often even though their use is the same as White young men. It fuels that frustration that one can understand in the African American community.

I would suggest that it is time for us to focus law enforcement resources on real drug problems, deal with that epidemic of prescription drug abuse and heroin overdose. Let's deal with mak-

ing sure that our children are safe rather than at risk from a vast underground drug distribution network. accounts, so this is an attractive source of revenue for people who would like to rob them.

Let's let the States make their own policy until we reclassify marijuana, frankly, no less dangerous than tobacco, which is completely legal in every State. In the meantime, we should at least stay out of the way, let States formulate their own policy, and have local authorities deal with real problems, not creating unnecessary ones.

CALIFORNIA'S DROUGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, for many in California, including my own family and my neighbors, it is an exciting time this year. This is harvest time. Busy, but again, a very enjoyable time we all look forward to as farmers and ranchers. You see more combines, shakers, and sweepers running from sunrise to sunset working to fill the next truckload with this season's crops. And you see the men and women responsible for producing nearly half of all U.S.-grown vegetables, nuts, and fruits.

But this year's harvest in the north State paints a much different picture, one with fallowing fields, wells that are going dry, and less and less truckloads of crops leaving those farms. As a farmer myself, we know it is the last truckload that leaves the field that is the one you make your living on.

From the grapes in world-renowned wines to almonds and pistachios, exports are down and production is lower, causing a troubling ripple effect in the region and across our Nation's economy in the form of lost jobs and revenue and less choices for high-quality crops grown by Americans for our American consumers.

The numbers for this year are without a doubt very troubling. On-farm gate prices are down, and farm yields per acre are down. According to a recent UC Davis study, just California alone is set to lose about \$2.7 billion due to the drought. Farm employment is down by over 10,000 jobs this year, as well as the 21,000 or so indirect jobs that will also be lost by those involved in the production and processing of farm crops.

Labor income is estimated to fall by at least \$716 million, being replaced by an already troubled and strapped unemployment. Direct crop revenue losses are going to be up to \$900 million, straight out of grower's pockets. In addition, the rice harvest is expected to cover only 375,000 acres, down from a peak number of 560,000 acres. The almond supply is expected to decrease by 4 percent, potentially losing market share to foreign interests. Cali-

fornia dairy production is down by at least 3 percent, costing an estimated \$250 million, a number that has shown significant increases in other States as well this year. Alfalfa hay shipments are significantly lower than last year, and the livestock industry faces losses of an estimated \$100 million in order to replace it.

Mr. Speaker, these are real numbers that are only set to get worse. We cannot simply stand by and watch as farmers, ranchers, small town economies, and ag employees face more water rationing and fallowed fields.

California and the West cannot afford another year of inaction from Congress. I rise today to urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle in both House and Senate to come to the table and advance commonsense drought solutions, such as new water storage and infrastructure, to provide relief now and in the future such as Sites Reservoir up in northern California and desalination projects for our cities. Let's get them permitted, let's get them approved and in the pipeline. We can't wait any longer. We need these reforms, indeed, now and for the future. Our State is growing, the population is growing, and we grow the finest and best crops and export them not only to the rest of the country, but to much of the world.

Mr. Speaker, not doing anything now or this year is a dereliction of our responsibility and betrays Americans who expect us to provide the products they consume and enjoy these fine ag products that, indeed, give America the reputation as being the breadbasket of the world.

□ 1015

END HUNGER NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, while there is talk of a 2-month spending bill to keep the government open before time runs out this week, we have yet to see it. Passing a short-term bill will only postpone a Republican shutdown, not stop it. As long as it remains a possibility, we need to talk about the cost to everyday families.

Unlike the last Republican shutdown in 2013, closing the government's doors this time around means millions and millions of Americans may be cut off from their Federal food assistance benefits.

Forty-five million Americans rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, to help put food on the table. SNAP is our Nation's premier antihunger program, and it is one of the most effective and efficient of any Federal programs.

Two-thirds of all SNAP recipients are the most vulnerable among us: children, seniors, and the disabled. Millions more are working families who